

Demographics of transnational voting in Mexico: changing times and challenges of their experiences in voting from abroad

Demografía del voto transnacional mexiquense: cambio de época y desafíos de sus experiencias en la emisión del voto desde el extranjero

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Abstract

The objective of this text is to expose the epochal changes and challenges of the transnational migrant vote in the State of Mexico in recent elections. From the perspective of transnational demography, one of the first epochal changes and challenges is to know how many Mexicans would be able to vote from abroad. It is recognized that voting from another country signifies an epochal change of transnational migration in Mexico. This fact is described as a milestone for their electoral participation in the elections for president of the republic and governor in the State of Mexico, and this has been one of the main challenges for its recognition and implementation in our state. It is concluded that, based on the linear arithmetic methodology, the number of possible Mexican voters living abroad has increased, at the same time that in their first voting experience the anti-systemic criteria predominated and the second was against a dictatorship of more than 90 years governing our federal entity.

Keywords: Transnational demographics, election, migration, vote, mexiquenses.

Resumen

El objetivo de este texto es exponer los cambios de época y desafíos del voto migrante transnacional del Estado de México en las elecciones recientes. Desde la demografía transnacional uno de los primeros desafíos es saber cuántos mexiquenses tendrían la posibilidad de votar desde el extranjero. Se reconoce que votar desde otro país significa un cambio de época de la migración transnacional mexiquense, este hecho se describe como un hito por su participación electoral en las elecciones para presidente de la república y gobernador(a) en el Estado de México y uno de los principales retos para su reconocimiento e implementación en nuestra entidad. Se concluye que, con base en la metodología aritmética lineal, se incrementó el número de posibles votantes mexiquenses residentes en el exterior, a la vez que, en su primera experiencia del voto predominó el criterio antisistémico y la segunda fue contra una dictadura de más de 90 años que gobernó nuestra entidad federativa.

Palabras clave: Demografía transnacional, elección, migración, voto, mexiquenses.

INTRODUCTION

Ot is unknown how many Mexicans reside abroad and how many had the opportunity to vote in the 2023 election for governor of the entity. Although it is known that about 12 million Mexican men and women live in the United States, there is no specific information on how many of them are from the State of Mexico. If the three generations of Mexicans residing in the United States are considered, it is estimated that there could be around 40 million. These data are obtained through Demography, a discipline that analyzes changes in the population, but our interest is focused, in this case, on transnational migration from the State of Mexico.

Demography reasonably assures us that we are facing major changes in the rate of growth of our populations and in their structure, we also know to a large extent when and where these changes will occur (Coughlin, 2019). In the case of transnational migration, it faces structural-conjunctural changes that are difficult to measure, but which we cannot fail to analyze in times of important social transformations. In the field of Demography, it is argued that transnational migration is one of the three great demographic challenges of the 21st century (Sánchez, 2021), and that is why it is important to analyze the Mexican case in the context of the great social changes (Campione, s/f).

TRANSNATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE UNITED STATES

The demographic study and conception of the population in the world and in our country evolved and changed throughout the 20th century, as well as in the years of the 21st century, reflecting the situations, contexts, individual, social concerns, and political and cultural aspirations of the different societies over time, to which the effects of the pandemic were added. This ever-changing field of knowledge was tailored to specific policy concerns and thus has never been apolitical, despite practitioners' protests, demographics holding it to be "natural." Since the 1970s, the demographic dynamics of our world and the nation have transformed public policies that shape family planning and population policy in general. Likewise, it highlights the rapid demographic growth caused by mass migration towards large cities and urban areas, and more recently observes the process of counter-urbanization towards medium-sized cities, it also covers settlement scenarios on the coast of Mexico.

Likewise, it is relevant to pay attention to the debates on pandemics, environmental protection and clean energy that have been linked to immigration-emigration-transit, both domestically and internationally.

Although these issues cover various regions in the world, as well as our country, and different periods of time, this change of era shares an interest in the transnational dynamics of emerging demographic discourses and practices.

At the end of the last century the topic of transnational demography began to emerge from sociology and social demography. This proposal arises from a critique of methodological nationalism (Faist, 2022). Specifically, it is about understanding international migration and the change towards transnational migration (where there are multidimensional connections between people from there and people from here), based on what they called a vision from below and a vision from above.¹ Thus, a review of the United States census data and the restrictions on immigration in this same country began. Furthermore, transnational migration implies considering its biological reproduction as a new demographic fact in the destination (by linking the origin with the families living in Mexico). For example, birth rates in the United States are said to have declined overall in 2019,² but rates among Mexican women also declined prior to that year (Bustamante, Flores, and Sono 2019).

These transnational demographic events imply a rooted or uprooted geopolitical and economic situation for some, as well as new biological aspects (births and deaths) and eugenics (political and ideological movement that seeks to qualitatively improve the population from a biological and natural approach, as opposed to moral, economic or cultural improvement).

Bulletin No. 196 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) mentions that 245 urns arrived with remains of Mexicans who died in the United States (July 11, 2020), however, the real number is unknown. In addition, there is no information about those who died from causes other than the pandemic. Only a small part of the complex expression of the demographic change of Mexican migrants (includes both the biological and social aspects). Studies documenting these changes have been conducted over time, a relevant

¹ Transnational demography is the study of the interconnection between the population of origin and the destination, as well as its biological-social determinants. It focuses on the creation of demographic measures and the improvement of estimates of links in different geographical spaces (extraterritoriality). It is also responsible for the structures, distribution and its individual determinants, as well as its articulation in the social dimension, its change and the characteristics that determine its growth in the destination country.

² Consult the following link: United States – Natality, available at <https://datosmacro.expansion.com/demografia/natalidad/usa> (03/07/2022).

pair being the work of Douglas Massey, Pren and Durand (2009), which shows the decline in Mexican immigration before 2008, and the study of Corona and Rodolfo Tuirán (2000), however, there are other American and Mexican researchers living in the United States who use terms such as change and continuity to accurately describe Mexican demographics in transnational contexts.

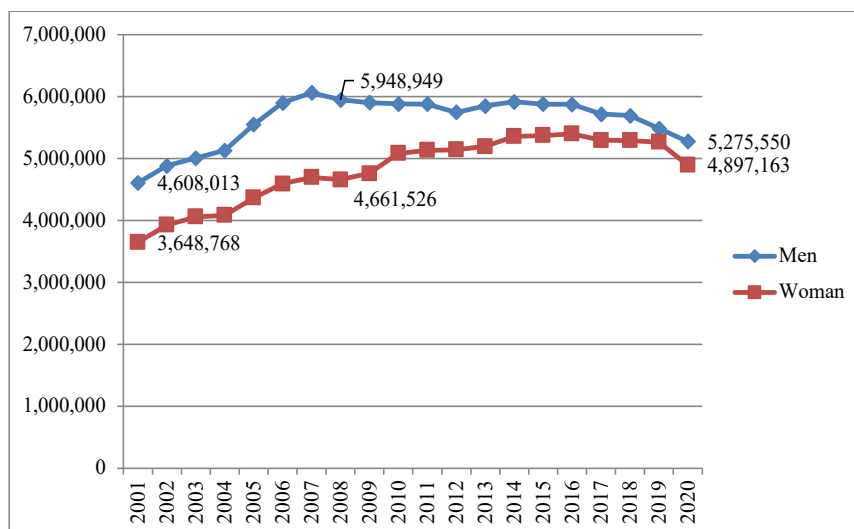
The biological dimensions (births and deaths) and social dimensions (immigration) are the factors that influence the size, structure and evolution of the population established in the United States. According to estimates from the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS), there were 10,668,659 Mexicans born in Mexico, which represents 1,337,631 fewer than in 2014 due to underenumeration caused by Covid-19. Of these Mexican residents in the United States, 52 percent were men and 48 percent were women. Demographic behaviors vary over time, for example, the greatest growth for men was recorded in 2007 and for women in 2010 (Figure 1). It is important to highlight that over time the presence of Mexican women in the neighboring country to the north increased, although with a downward trend. This indicates that they, Mexican women, go to the United States with the intention of staying or remaining as long as possible. According to the 2020 Current Population Survey (CPS), there are an estimated 11.5 million Mexicans born in Mexico and residing in the United States, a difference of 800 thousand compared to the ACS. Adding second and third generation Mexicans, in that same sense the Mexican population in the country in that same year was 38.8 million (13.8 second generation and 13.5 third generation). This represents 30.8 percent of the population residing in Mexico in that year, which was 126 million people (INEGI, 2021). In summary, we observe how another Mexico emerged within the United States from a demographic point of view, which corresponds to an era in the neighboring country to the north, where many of them are originally from the State of Mexico.

Through data derived from the ACS, we can present additional information about the epochal changes of Mexican transnational demographics in the United States:

- 61 percent of Mexicans residing in the United States between 2001 and 2020 were between 15 and 44 years old, placing the average age of this population at 39 years during this period.
- In 2001, Mexican immigrants who had citizenship were equivalent to 21.9 percent and in 2020 they became more than a third (34 percent).

- In 2001, 58.1 percent of Mexicans residing in the United States were working and in 2020 this percentage stood at 64.4 percent.
- Of the Mexican immigrants residing in the United States in 2020, 68.1 percent arrived in that nation between 1990 and 2020, that is, in the last thirty years. This period coincides with the drop in emigration and the economic crises of 2009, 2020 and 2021, while political alternations occurred in the United States and Mexico, as well as the crisis that derived from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Mexican men and women residing in the United States 2001-2020



Source: Own elaboration based on the American Community Survey (2001-2020).

The brief exposition provides the necessary context to document the most significant changes in Mexican transnational migration between 2000 and 2030. In addition, one of the most relevant changes of this migration is highlighted: the right to vote from abroad.

METHODOLOGY AND INFORMATIONSO URCES

Mexico is a country rich in statistical information and, starting in the early 1990s, it began to include questions related to international migration in its census samples and sociodemographic surveys. In this estimation exercise, the information from INEGI (2000) recovered from the XII General Census of Population and Housing 2000 was taken into account;

COESPO, 1993 and COESPO (2008) data taken from the Population Program, State of Mexico, 2005-2011. The information generated by INEGI (1992) in its National Survey of Demographic Dynamics (ENADID) 1992 was also used, as were those of 1997 and 2009; the data from the INEGI (2010) derived from the 2010 Population and Housing Census. As well as the information from the INEGI (2015), with its 2015 Intercensal Survey, also the statistics derived from the INEGI (2014), as well as that of 2018. It would not have been possible without the data from CONAPO (2018), referring to the Projections of the population of Mexico and the entities federative 2016-2050; nor without the information derived from INEGI (2020) in its 2020 Population and Housing Census; Finally, it is worth mentioning that the projections are mid-year.

Population censuses and sociodemographic surveys allow an objective estimate of the base population for the projection of mexiquense residing in the United States. In 2008 the State Population Council estimated that this base population was 656,020 people. By using this data as a basis, it was possible to project mexiquense international migration until 2030, taking as a reference the net balance estimated by the National Population Council (CONAPO) in 2018. The assumptions of high, medium and low net migration balance allow us to consider the change in mexiquense transnational migration until 2030. This estimate was based on the population censuses and sociodemographic surveys of the INEGI, assuming a linear arithmetic growth in mexiquense transnational migration. Despite possible events such as the pandemic, CONAPO had already predicted an unprecedented drop in the migratory balance in 2010, which coincided with what happened in 2020, and projected a V-shaped recovery after this last year (Figure 2).

MEXICAN TRANSNATIONAL DEMOGRAPHY AND CHANGE OF TIME

It is a major challenge to record, from demographics, the changes in time between different periods of transnational migration. These changes imply a great challenge in the precise estimation of its trajectory over time. To take on this challenge, in the study of the transnational demographics of mexiquense, we will use mexiquense sources to approximate the volume of migration of permanent residents abroad, of which 99 percent are in the United States of America (USA). Although this approach can be questioned, we believe that it is the only way to obtain a rough estimate of mexiquense abroad. To do this, we are based on assumptions that can vary and change the trajectory of the mexiquense diaspora, since they are subject to

biological and social factors, including economic crises, health crises and other events that mark the epochal changes of this population over time. The following estimate is presented based on these assumptions and the absolute rates or aggregates.

Figure 2: International net migration of the State of Mexico, 2000-2030



Source: CONAPO 2000, (s/f) and 2012

According to a high hypothesis, it is estimated that there would be an annual loss of 39 thousand transnational mexiquense migrants on average between 1987 and 2020. By 2024, it is expected that 1.6 million people born in the State of Mexico would reside abroad and in 2030 it is projected that there would be 1.8 million transnational Mexicans.

According to the hypothesis that shows a negative balance of around 33 thousand people annually between 1987 and 2020, according to INEGI data, on average there would be 1.4 million mexiquenses living abroad in 2024 and by 2030 it is estimated that this figure would rise to 1.6 million. This hypothesis is between the high and medium hypothesis projected by CONAPO in 2018.

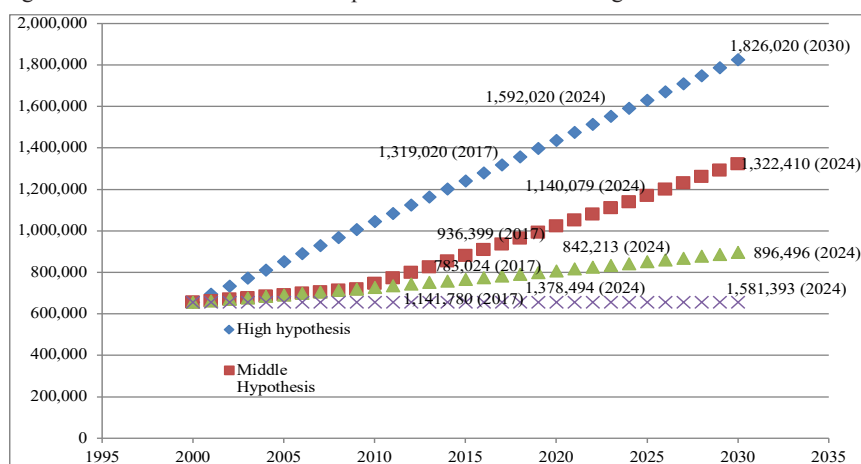
Based on the average hypothesis with a negative balance of 20,065 mexiquense transnational migrants between 1987 and 2020, it is projected that by 2024 there would be a total of one million 140 thousand mexiquen-

ses residing abroad and by 2030 it is estimated that this figure would reach 1.3 million people, from the State of Mexico, permanently settled abroad (CONAPO, 2018).

Finally, taking the low hypothesis as a reference, with an assumption of an average annual growth rate of 1.01 percent, according to CONAPO in 2018, it is estimated that in 2024 842 thousand mexiquenses would be living abroad and by 2030 almost 900 thousand people.

From the above, it could be argued that, assuming that 60 percent of mexiquense migrants residing abroad are of legal age, between 500,000 and one million of our compatriots would have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote through the different modalities, proposed by the electoral institutions, to vote from abroad: either by mail, in person or electronically (Figure 3).

Figure 3: State of Mexico: Mexican permanent international migration 2000-2030



Source: own elaboration with data from INEGI, 1992, 1997, 2000, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2018 and 2020, COESPO 1993 and 2008, and CONAPO (2018). It should be noted that the projections are for the middle of the year.

In the electoral process at the national level, and especially at the state level, mexiquenses residing abroad cast their vote, which expresses a change of era in transnational migration. However, the great challenge is to convince mexiquenses residing abroad to cast their vote in the elections for governor, mayor or deputies. This is because, if the presidential elections in 2006 are taken as a reference and the low hypothesis is taken into account, we would have a participation in casting votes from abroad of 0.55 percent and 0.44 percent at the state level in 2012.

STATE OF MEXICO: THE TRANSNATIONAL VOTE AND ITS FIRST EXPERIENCES AS A CHANGE OF ERA

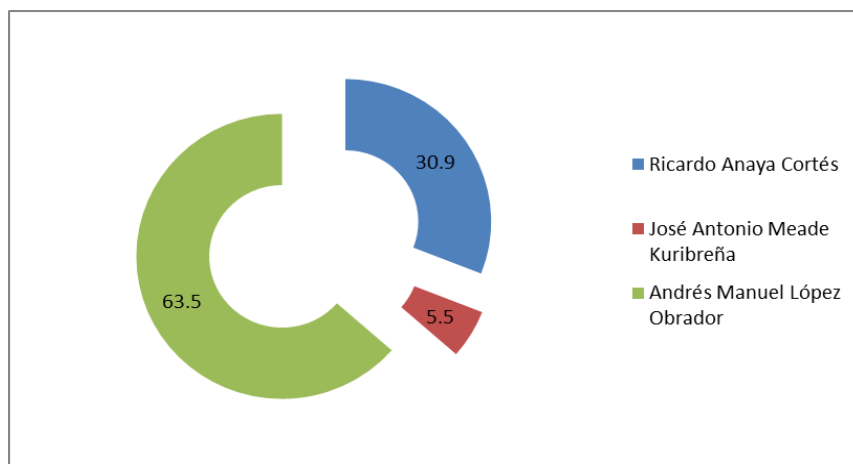
The transnational migration system of the State of Mexico has witnessed epochal changes in various contexts, such as economic, political, health, technological, political and social or environmental crises. For example, 4,118 people voted from abroad in the 2006 elections, while in 2012, 3,342 international migrants of voting age did so. These data indicate that international migrants from the State of Mexico actively participate in the electoral process, which represents a change of era for the mexiquense diaspora. In those years, for the first time, the right to vote from abroad was exercised for mexiquenses. In the 2017 elections for governor of the entity, 45.4 percent voted for Morena, 23.9 percent for the PAN and 12.1 percent for the PRI-PVEM-NA-PES alliance. This distribution reflects discontent with the party in power and shows an epochal change in electoral consciousness. The election in the State of Mexico in June 2017 was historic, since for the first time the winning party did so with a minimum difference of three percent compared to the opposition (Morena). In the 2018 elections at the national level, 98,470 people voted from abroad, thus 67 percent chose Andrés Manuel López Obrador, 27 percent for Ricardo Anaya and 4.9 percent for José Antonio Meade. These results reflected discontent with the way of governing both in the country and in the entity (IEEM, 2017 and 2023b).

In the case of the mexiquense entity, more than five thousand migrants cast their vote, which was distributed as follows: 63.5 percent voted for López Obrador, followed by Ricardo Anaya with 30.9 percent and José Antonio Meade with 5.5 percent. This confirms what some analysts had predicted as an anti-systemic vote on the part of transnational migration both at the national level and in the entity (Figure 4).

Without a doubt we will be witnessing an anti-systemic vote for the 2023 and 2024 elections, the vote of (dis)trust and hope in QT or, voters will respect the new turn to the left as well as its consolidation in Mexico of a new political era. But for this Morena has already overcome the great test: the State of Mexico, which concentrates 12.3 million voters in the country (IEEM, 2022). It is an entity in which the Institutional Revolutionary Party governed for more than 90 years and in which the female position in the competition was a reality, given that Professor Delfina Gómez won. That is to say, there is a change of era in political terms because a woman governs the entity for the first time, but she will have a tough test

in the face of the resistance of the institutional structure built for decades by mexiquense neoliberalism.

Figure 4: Federal elections: votes of Mexicans from abroad, 2018



Source: INE, 2018, available at <https://computos2018.ine.mx/#/presidencia/entidad/detalle/1/1/2/1?entidad=15> (September 10, 2019).

It is important to mention that Professor Delfina Gómez, in her competition, hoped to obtain a greater preference in the votes, since in the previous election she lost by only 2.7 percent of the votes in the State of Mexico (169,899 votes). It is evident that that election was marked by the effect of President López Obrador. Furthermore, the organizational experience as candidates of the party in power, the pink cards that represented the social policy of the State of Mexico, the female vote and the opponents of the leftist movement in the state influenced the loss of votes. Despite all this, in the election that some called the return to electoral hell, “Never had the PRI faced such a powerful and similar opponent in the State of Mexico” San José (2023), Professor Gómez and her party emerged victorious.

The inhabitants of the State of Mexico opted for a change of era in the political sphere, which allowed the participation of residents abroad. Their vote, as on previous occasions, follows the pattern of the national diaspora in terms of electoral behavior from abroad. However, at the municipal level this pattern may vary depending on whether the area has a migratory tradition (rural) or if it is an emerging area (urban) and the level of politicization (González, 2012).

In the most recent election for governor, migrants residing abroad exercised their right to vote. Therefore, political parties had to encourage this type of voting, either by postal mail or electronically. Taking these general data into account, the main actors in national and local politics maintained that the electronic voting system, which is already in force, could complement the vote of Mexicans residing abroad and thus extend it to the country's prison population, in order to avoid security complications for the personnel participating in the election tasks (Ramayo, 2016). Furthermore, academics supported the idea of the electronic ballot box (Vergara and de los Santos, 2022), especially in the context of a health crisis such as Covid-19, which could discourage electronic voting in our country (Mendoza, s/f), and this system could be extended to households and the voting-age population with disabilities residing in our country. In short, bringing democracy to the digital world at the subnational and international level.

The Registration System for Voting from Abroad Local Electoral Process 2022-2023 (IEEM, 2022a; IEEM, 2022b) was available on the platform of the Electoral Institute of the State of Mexico and the alternative to register to vote was shown: at the same time it was specified that, to cast your vote from abroad, it was necessary to register in the system no later than March 10, 2023 and choose the electronic modality. postal or in-person vote for which you wish to vote (and included a registration guide). As is known, international migrants from the State of Mexico contributed to the important electoral experiment of 2023 and will support that of 2024.

MEXIQUEENSES VOTE FROM ABROAD 2023

In the recent experience of transnational voting, the decline of the PRI and the rise of Morena along with its allies could be observed. According to data provided by the National Electoral Institute (INE), a total of 3,354 Mexican men and women cast their vote from abroad. These voters were distributed in the two federal entities where gubernatorial elections were held in Coahuila and in the State of Mexico on June 4, 2023. In both entities, the majority of countrymen residing abroad chose to vote electronically, followed by voting by mail and, finally, in person.

It should be noted that in the State of Mexico the votes for Delfina Gómez represented 72.7 percent (of the 2,319 received from abroad), while for Alejandra del Moral it was 26.3 percent. The participation rate was 42.8 percent, much lower than the first time in 2017, which was 81.3 percent. However, at that time the vote from abroad did not exceed 300 votes (297 to be precise). That is, six years later the vote of Mexicans from abroad

increased 34.2 percent. Since those years it was argued that the vote of compatriots had an anti-systemic character. This means that the vote of the countrymen in 2023 was also anti-system, against the imperfect dictatorship established by the PRI in the State of Mexico, whose hallmark was corruption and business (Table 1).

Table 1: Mexican men and women who voted from abroad in the 2023 elections

Entities	Electronic vote	Postal vote	In-person vote	Total	LNRE	% Participation
Coahuila	567	389	79	1,035	2,350	44.0
Estado de México	1,376	812	131	2,319	5,424	42.8
Total	1,943	1,201	210	3,354	7,774	43.1

Source: https://www.votoextranjero.mx/documents/52001/1159137/Informe+que+rinde+el+SE_Num+de+VMRE_PEL+2022-2023_040623.pdf/6e2d03aa-1b87-4034-bb6b-e3b781cf388b y <https://repositoriodocumental.ine.mx/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/151240/crfe-3se-2023-04-24-p5-2-informe.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y> (07/06/2023).

CONCLUSIONS

Transnational demography represents one of the most significant challenges in the study of migration. This is because migrants take their biological and social identity with them to the destination. That is, they contribute to the demographic growth of the United States over different periods of time through births, deaths, migrations, work, poverty, among other factors. If we consider that nearly 40 million Mexicans reside abroad, this is equivalent to an entire country that left Mexico due to various historical, structural, and cyclical circumstances, among other reasons. The most important challenge lies in how to integrate them into the social and political processes of the country, as well as the mexiquense entity, both currently and in the future.

Another of the most significant challenges in relation to the mexiquense diaspora is the preparation of an own estimate, supported by demographic research that has served as a basis for the generation of data with various assumptions and scenarios for the year 2030. This allows us to have a concrete figure, at the same time as recording the changes in times that, without a doubt, present an analytical approach (at a macro level) and a comprehensive approach (at a micro level). which remain integrated with the different estimates and reconciliations carried out by national institutions (Escobedo, 2007).

The basic linear arithmetic method provides validity and reliability, however, acceptability and the way the procedure is constructed to arrive at the point estimate come into play. This is because the estimation of transnational migration is a variable that undergoes significant changes in different historical or social periods, and its numerical and symbolic construction is difficult. Firstly, its estimate must be objective, but is subject to subjective interpretations (Escobedo, 2007).

An additional challenge is the integration of migrants into the political processes of the country and the State of Mexico. However, how to achieve it if until now it has not been possible, according to the national experience, nor in the mexiquense entity? What has been observed is an anti-systemic vote (the first change of era in the national political system) against corruption. This is manifested in the first voting experiences in our country and in the State of Mexico, where the vote went to the opposition. Specifically, when the National Action Party (PAN) won, the vote went to the PAN; When the Party of the Democratic Revolution won, the vote went to them, just as when the National Regeneration Movement (Morena) won, the majority vote went to them. With these results, political parties must take note and fulfill the promises they made during political campaigns.

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